

**Montana Department of Military Affairs
Disaster & Emergency Services Division
State Emergency Coordination Center**

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Situation Report for August 5, 2003 (issued @ 14:00 hrs.)

Wildfires of 2003

Attention * - New information shown in today's report displayed in ***Bold Italics*** type.

I. - **Background Information:**

• ***Due to favorable weather conditions beginning on Saturday August 2nd, 2003 minimal precipitation helped firefighting efforts across the state and in isolated areas. The major end of the season weather event is predicted to occur closer to the end of September or first part of October. A return to high temperatures, drying conditions and possibly thunderstorms is expected later in the week. A vigilant fire watch is expected to continue as a result of these predictions.***

II. - **Current Montana Fire Conditions:** (as reported to NRCC August 5th, 2003 (2200))

Light initial attack – 12 new fires for 491 acres

- ***Flathead Area Command (Mann) is managing the large fires on the Flathead National Forest, Kootenai National Forest and Glacier National Park.***
 - ***Wedge Canyon – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Bennett), 25,225 acres, 47% contained, 20 miles E of Eureka, Montana.***
 - ***Robert – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Stam), 24,400 acres, 40% contained, 8 miles N of Columbia Falls, Montana. Transfer of command to Type 1 Incident Management Team (Ferguson) will begin 8/5.***
 - ***Trapper Creek Complex – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Raley). Complex is 20,500 acres, 40% contained. This Complex is made up of the Trapper Creek (15,900 acres – 40% contained), Paul Bunyan (300 acres – 100% contained), Wolf Gun (4,300 acres – 35% contained) and Trout (1/4 acre – 50% contained) fires located 45 statute miles NE of Kalispell, Montana.***

- *Little Salmon Creek Complex – This 12,375 acre lightning caused Wildland Fire Use complex is located 47 miles SE of Kalispell, Montana in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This complex, made up of the Pagoda (125 acres) and the Little Salmon (12,250 acres), is being managed to accomplish resource objectives. Transfer of command to a Fire Use Management (Rath) will begin 8/5.*
- *Booth - 2,500 acres, 80% contained, 17 miles S of Colstrip, Montana.*
- *Treasure County Complex – 9,998 acres, 90% contained. This Complex is made up of the Johnny (7,497 acres – 90% lined), Starks (1,053 acres – 100% lined) and Earl (1,448 acres – 100% lined) fires located 8 miles S of Hysham, Montana.*
- *Black Frog Complex - Type 1 Incident Management Team (Frye), 90% contained. This Complex is made up of the Blackwall fire (4,939 acres), located 32 miles N of Salmon, Idaho and Frog Pond (2,336 acres), as well as numerous concentrations of spots on both fires for a total of 7,275 acres located 34 miles S of Hamilton, Montana.*
- *Big Creek - 1,339 acres, 80% contained as of July 27th, 4 miles NW of Victor, Montana. About 20% of the perimeter will not be shown contained or controlled until there is a significant change in the weather, therefore, this will be the last information reported for this incident.*
- *Porcupine Creek – 1,000 acres, no report of % contained, 7 miles N of Nashua, MT.*

STATE FORECAST FOR MONTANA

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE GREAT FALLS MT

410 AM MDT TUE AUG 5 2003

WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Today - Partly Cloudy. Scattered Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs 80 To 90.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Lows 50 To 60.

Wednesday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs 78 To 88.

CENTRAL MONTANA

Today - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs In The Upper 70s To Mid 80s.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Lows In The Mid 50s To Lower 60s.

Wednesday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs In The Lower 80s To Lower 90s.

SOUTHWEST MONTANA

Today - Partly Cloudy. Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs In The 70s To Lower 80s.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Evening Then Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms After Midnight. Lows In The Lower To Mid 50s.

Wednesday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Morning Then Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Afternoon. Highs In The Lower 70s To Lower 80s.

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN MONTANA

Today - Partly Cloudy. A Chance Of Afternoon Thunderstorms West. Highs 80 To 90.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy West...Otherwise Mostly Clear. A Chance Of Thunderstorms West. Lows 55 To 65.

Wednesday - Partly Cloudy North...Mostly Cloudy South. A Chance Of Thunderstorms South And West. Highs 85 To 95.

III. - Summary of Actions being taken by Local Government Officials:

Local government resources from various jurisdictions have been actively engaged in fire fighting efforts, particularly during the past several days. The evacuation of residents whose properties have been threatened have been conducted as required.

<u>Local Emergency and Disaster Declarations</u>		<u>Date Filed</u>
Cascade County	Emergency Declaration (Box Canyon/Long Mtn.)	7/15/03
Garfield County	Disaster Declaration (Missouri Breaks)	7/15/03
Beaverhead County	Emergency Resolution (multiple fires)	7/17/03
Ravalli County	Emergency Declaration (Big Creek)	7/20/03
Flathead County	Emergency Declaration (Wedge Canyon)	7/21/03
Sanders County	Resolution (Level II Fire Restrictions)	7/29/03

IV. - Summary of State Activities and Resources Committed:

State, Local and Tribal Declarations:

On 7/18/03, Governor Judy Martz signed an Executive Order (# 14-03) in which she declared a statewide emergency thereby enabling mobilization of state resources (including the Montana National Guard) should they be needed to help protect the life, health and/or property of Montana's citizens.

The Flathead County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution on August 4th, 2003 stating that because the weather forecasts indicated no relief from the dry conditions and fires continued in the county it was “resolved that stage II fire restrictions on all State forested lands and all private forested lands open to the public” will be in effect until otherwise stated.

The Fallon county Board of Commisioners passed a resolution on August 4th, 2003 that declared that Stage 1 restrictions, which prohibit all open burning within the boundaries of Fallon county, Mt, would be in effect until rescinded by the commissioners.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation have issued a resolution that due to the extremely high fire danger has closed the tribal forest and range lands. All previous privileges of access are temporarily suspended and all tribal trust and tribal fee, forest and range lands are closed to public.

FEMA Declarations:

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 23rd, 2003 for Missouri Breaks Complex fire.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 25th, 2003 for Flathead County’s Wedge Canyon and Roberts fires.

Requests for State Assistance:

- The Montana National Guard is assisting “initial attack” fire suppression operations by supplying 3 UH-60 (Blackhawk) Helicopters modules and one UH-1 Helicopter module and approximately 51 soldiers. One Blackhawk helicopter module is currently assigned to the Flathead Interagency Dispatch Center, another is assigned to the Helena Interagency Dispatch Center, and the third is assigned to Missoula. The UH-1 helicopter module is currently deployed to Billings. The Montana National Guard Personnel Resources currently allocated to wild land fire suppression duties stands at 51. The National Guard will be rotating in new air crews in Helena and Kalispell this weekend.
- One NG Liaison Officer has been assigned to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NGCC) in Missoula.
- MT Highway Patrol and MT Department of Transportation are supporting fire efforts with local jurisdictions and fire management to limit travel disturbances.

Status of State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

- Montana DES is providing support to local governments through the State Emergency

Coordination Center in Helena. The SECC is currently operating at Activation Level III. Level III operations include a full staff 0800-1700 during weekdays with a duty officer on call after hours. Weekend operations will be staffed at Level II from 0800-1700 unless it becomes necessary to advance to a higher activation level.

The State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC) will continue to monitor conditions and is prepared to provide 24-hour incident support to local governments. After office hours (i.e., 1700-0700) support is available through the DES Duty Officer who may be reached at (406) 841-3911.

Addendums to Situation Report

As of: **August 5th, 2003**

Road Closures: Information is current as of 08-05-03

Southwest

U.S. 93 is now open 24 hours a day with no restrictions over Lost Trail Pass. Still closed are all trails between the Gibbonsville road and Highway 43, trailheads at Cabinet and Richardson creeks, the Anderson Mountain road, and the May Creek campground. The Foothills and Gibbonsville roads, west of Wisdom, in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, will reopen Tuesday, August 5.

Northwest

More than half of Glacier National Park is OPEN. Access is available by U.S. Highways 2, 49, 89, and the historic Going to the Sun Road from St. Mary to Logan Pass. The Inside North Fork Road (north and south of Polebridge) is open from Fish Creek to Big Prairie, just north of Polebridge, but is closed from Big Prairie north.

Reported Major Fire Activity:

Report Date: August 5th, 2003

Wedge Canyon:

Residences threatened: 100
Estimated Cost: \$12,100,000

Commercial Property: 7 Outbuildings/Other: 29
% contained: 47%

Roberts Fire:

Residences threatened: 0
Estimated Cost: \$7,500,000

Commercial Property: 6 Outbuildings/Other: 10
% contained: 40%

Trapper Creek Complex:

Residences threatened: 0
Estimated Cost: \$1,792 ,000

Commercial Property: 3 Outbuildings/Other: 8
% contained: 40%

Little Salmon Complex:

Residences threatened: 6
Estimated Cost: \$242,500

Commercial Property: 0 Outbuildings/Other: 12
% contained: NR%

Booth:

Residences threatened: 0
Estimated Cost: \$70,000

Commercial Property: 0 Outbuildings/Other: 0
% contained: 80%

Treasure County Complex:

Residences threatened: 15
Estimated Cost: \$415,949

Commercial Property: 2 Outbuildings/Other: 60
% contained: 90%

Black Frog Complex:

Residences threatened: 0

Commercial Property: 0

Outbuildings/Other: 0

Estimated Cost: \$8,800 ,000 % contained: 90%

Porcupine Creek:

Residences threatened: 0 Commercial Property: 0 Outbuildings/Other: 0
Estimated Cost: \$NR % contained: NR%

Hidden Lake:

Residences threatened: 0 Commercial Property: 0 Outbuildings/Other: 0
Estimated Cost: \$2,700 ,000 % contained: 100%

Big Creek:

Residences threatened: 0 Commercial Property: 0 Outbuildings/Other: 0
Estimated Cost: \$ 4,048 % contained: 80%

Ross Creek:

Residences threatened: 0 Commercial Property: 0 Outbuildings/Other: 0
Estimated Cost: \$ 2,616 ,570 % contained: 100%

Musselshell Complex:

Residences threatened: 0 Commercial Property: 0 Outbuildings/Other: 0
Estimated Cost: \$130,000 % contained: 100%

Current DES Situation Report From Flathead Area Command:

Wildfires in Glacier have caused the need for the evacuation of west Glacier and Apgar. There are approximately 250 homes in the area. The local Red Cross chapter has established a shelter in White Fish at the North Valley Hospital Basement.

Fire Restrictions and Closures

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Restrictions</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Northwestern Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Southwestern Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Central Montana Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
South Central Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003

Eastern Montana Zone		
<u>Stage I Restrictions</u> (Billings)		July 18, 2003

Stage II Restrictions

State & Private: Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass counties July 25, 2003

Federal: Treasure, Musselshell, Bighorn, Yellowstone July 18, 2003

Stage I Restrictions (Lewistown) July 21, 2003

Stage II Restrictions

State & Private: Liberty County

Federal: Chouteau, Fergus, Judith Basin, Wheatland July 25, 2003

Stage I Restrictions (Miles City) July 26, 2003

General Fire Information and Severity to Date

- Plum Creek has closed all private and public use on their holdings, logging operations are also shut down
- Beaverhead and Deerlodge National Forest have currently Plume Dominated Fire Conditions and are expected to continue for the next few days
- Ft Peck Fire on the Ft Peck Agency is called the Porcupine Creek Fire.

- Wedge Canyon expanded on the Northern and Southern boundaries.
- Roberts expanded on the Western boundary.
- Currently there are no overnight facilities at Apgar or West Glacier.
- Large Season ending storm not expected until late September or early October.
- Closures are likely to remain in effect for the remainder of the season.
- Energy Release Component
 - Lincoln Ranger District reports component same as 1988 when the Canyon Creek Fire started
 - Helena reports component is 14 points higher than when the Cave Gulch Fire started in 2000
- NW Area command
 - Burnout initiated by fire management on the Roberts and Wedge Canyon have proven successful to date
- General Cost for fires under Northern Rockies Coordination and acreage total [from Northern Rockies Priorities List -acreage estimate on active fires]:

Cost: \$41.8 million	Acreage: 119,192
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Web Links:

Glacier National Park Fire Management:

<http://www.nps.gov/glac/resources/fires.htm>

Northern Rockies Interagency Information Center

<http://fs.fed.us/r1/fire/2003fires/index.htm>